

Testimony of Gina Maroney
On Raised House Bill No. 5447
March 13, 2018

My name is Gina Maroney and I live in New Hartford, Connecticut. I do not support **HB 5447 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education**

I have two children ages 16 and 14 who are in 10th and 8th grade but they are not attending our regional middle school / high school. They both attend private schools where the teachers are trained to work with dyslexic students.

When my children started kindergarten at our public school, I had no idea they would later be diagnosed with dyslexia and trusted that the public school would be able to teach them. I was wrong because although they both struggled with reading throughout their elementary school years, had Individual Education Plans (IEP's), and were receiving pull-out instruction in reading, it was not until 6th grade and INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS that I found out they were dyslexic. This was all because no one in the New Hartford School system was trained to identify or had the teaching knowledge and tools to meet their dyslexic needs. The teachers were not even knowledgeable enough to let me know my children could only read at a 3rd and 4th grade reading level although they were about to enter 7th grade.

This late identification wasted not only the most important years of my children's prime opportunity to learn to read and I felt like I could not let any more time go by. I sought advice from an attorney and my children were placed in private schools. I did not like going this route but was desperate because the public school was not able to educate my children.

Both of my children have attended Ben Bronz Academy in West Hartford and I encourage you to visit the school. It is not aesthetically pleasing however, the work they do to remediate the students is outstanding. When I first visited the school the director said to me, "do not mind our appearance as we put all our money back into the students. **And they do!!** They give the students what they need to grow and learn so one day the students can become productive members of society instead of a social, expensive burden on society. Ben Bronz does not have luxuries even though it cost \$52,000 a year for one student to attend the school. If this bill is passed as written, they will not be able to do the amazing work they do with the amazing teachers they employ. As members of society, we will have to shoulder the cost of students who are NOT being taught in the public schools. It is not the private special education schools that are the problem! It is the public schools not properly identifying and teaching our special education students so that is what needs to be fixed.

Please do not support **HB 5447 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education**

Sincerely,

Gina Maroney, parent
New Hartford, CT